

Gitmo letter

April 22, 2009

The Honorable David Obey, Chairman

Committee on Appropriations

H-218, The Capitol

Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member

Committee on Appropriations

H-218, The Capitol

Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis:

We are writing this letter to express our concern and opposition to the proposed funding in the FY09 War Supplemental to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, and the relocation of those detainees to other facilities, including military installations in the United States. The President has proposed that \$50 million from the Iraq Freedom Fund within the supplemental be provided to support the relocation of detainees, military personnel and support services from Guantanamo. In addition, the President has also requested \$30 million be provided to facilitate the closure of the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay.

As you know, President Obama, as one of his first actions as President, signed an Executive Order that directs the Secretary of Defense to close the detention facility at Guantanamo within a year. However, this order was signed prior to any formal review of the operations at the detention facility. Furthermore, the report submitted by Admiral Patrick Walsh and his team on the operations at the detention facility clearly stated that the conditions at Guantanamo met those outlined in the Geneva Conventions. Still, the Administration is continuing its push for the closure of the facility without any further review of what impact it may have on detainee security operations.

Our gravest concern with providing this funding is the lack of a clear and comprehensive strategy for the closure and the relocation of detainees. In fact, respective committees in the House and Senate have yet to hold a single hearing to review the complex issues associated with closing Guantanamo Bay, including the transfer of terrorists in custody and future detainee operations.

The terrorists held at Guantanamo present a serious threat to the security of the American people. At least 61 combatants released so far are believed to have returned to the battlefield, rejoining the fight against U.S. military forces. Closing Guantanamo and bringing detention operations to a grinding halt will not help us achieve victory any quicker or make the American people any safer. If the President is serious about closing Guantanamo Bay without jeopardizing our security, then the Administration needs to work directly with Congress to create a detention process that keeps detainees off U.S. soil and prevents terrorists from returning to the battlefield. Until there is a plan in place and detainee operations are thoroughly reviewed, we respectfully request that the Appropriations Committee consider withholding funds for the closure of Guantanamo Bay.

Sincerely,

Rep. Gresham Barret

Rep. Brian Bilbray

Rep. Dan Boren

Rep. Henry Brown

Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart

Rep. Mary Fallin

Rep. Trent Franks

Rep. Darrell Issa

Rep. Lynn Jenkins

Rep. Connie Mack

Rep. John Mica

Rep. Jerry Moran

Rep. Bill Posey

Rep. Tom Rooney

Rep. Bill Schuster